

Owners Agent Technical Assistance Grant 2014 (PON-ENE-2014-44)

Questions submitted and answered as of September 8, 2014

Question: The form of Attachment B only lists "municipality, regional school district OR water/wastewater district". For applications from RPAs, is the CEO of the RPA intended to sign Attachment B and if so, can the form be amended to include "regional planning agency"?

Answer: Previously, DOER answered that the CEO signing Attachment B must be the CEO of the municipality(ies).

CORRECTION: DOER has updated the PON Attachment B to clarify that regional planning agencies (RPAs), as grant applicants, do need to complete and sign the Attachment. DOER thanks you for bringing this issue to our attention. As now reflected in the revised PON, the CEO signature should be that of the RPA. For further clarification, the updated PON now states:

FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Question: Our town is preparing the application for the OATA grant. We are just starting the construction phase of an ESCO project (it was passed at Town Meeting and the contract is being signed this week) and are also investigating solar on several sites in town, two roofs and possibly two ground-mounts. I was told by our regional advisor we could split the OATA request between solar and the ESCO. I wanted to verify as the application says "check the box", not "boxes" as to which projects we are applying for assistance on. If we can split the request, do we need to designate amounts for each, i.e., \$10,000 ESCO and \$2500 solar, or can it be up to our discretion as the need for consulting arises?

Answer: Applicants may apply for OATA funding for more than one eligible project type. Rather than submit one application with two boxes checked, however, please submit separate complete applications for each proposed OATA project, indicating in each application how much of the total \$12,500 grant would be applied to each project. The total award for all projects applied for would remain capped at \$12,500.

Question: In Attachment A, does an RPA submitting an application need to answer/address the bullet items that precede the 'For Regional Planning Agencies Only' bullet? If so:

For the bullet "Why an owner's agent is critical for your municipality to implement this project", does the RPA need to provide this explanation for each community in the project?

The bullet "A discussion of the specific tasks you expect the owner's agent to perform once the services are awarded?" appears to ask for similar information the RPA would provide for the sub-bullet "A description of services being provided to the municipalities identified for the project" under the 'For Regional Planning Agencies Only' bullet. Please clarify if an RPA is expected to address these items separately.

Answer: The answer to both questions is "yes." An RPA would need to provide the explanation for each community in the project, and the RPA must address separately the questions, "A discussion of the specific tasks you expect the owner's agent to perform once the services are awarded?" and "A description of services being provided to the municipalities identified for the project."

Question: Attachment A indicates that the response should be limited to the space provided below. Since this will be an online application, how much space (in characters or file size) will be allowed?

Answer: Applicants should plan to cover the response for Attachment A in two to three sentences.

Question: If a community received funding under PON-ENE-2014-004, does that preclude an RPA from including them as one of their 'assisted municipalities' under the current OATA grant? I was assuming having received funding under PON-ENE-2014-004 would only preclude the community from applying directly to the current OATA grant opportunity.

Answer: In an RPA grant application, any "assisted municipalities" that got an OATA grant in the 2013

round would be ineligible, just as if they were applying on their own for the current opportunity.

Question: I have a question regarding the Owner's Agent Grant. The towns of Hamilton and Wenham would like to run a program similar to a "Solarize Mass" programs for both communities. We have been talking with MAPC about providing technical expertise and I'm wondering if this would be a potential project for the Owners Agent Grant.

Answer: In terms of solar power, DOER's solicitation for Owner's Agent Technical Assistance states that the Division will provide grants for agents to assist grant applicants with installation of solar on municipal property, and with assessment or development of community shared solar. Since "Solarize" programs don't fit into either project type category, DOER would not provide funding for an owner's agent to assist with a Solarize-type program.

Question:

The towns of Lenox and Lee would like to move forward with a joint RFP for solar projects. Can two towns, intent on issuing a joint solar RFP, apply for separate Owner's Agent Technical Assistance Grants and use the funds toward a joint project? If there is a joint project, would we be penalized with a reduction in our aggregate grant funding?

We note that individual cities and towns may apply separately and regional planning entities may apply on behalf of multiple communities. However, the collaboration of two or more communities on a project without a regional entity does not seem to be contemplated in the instructions. We are happy to apply separately, but wish to ensure that if we submit a joint application our chance for receiving a grant or the amount of the joint grant will not be reduced.

Answer:

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. In the past we did allow up to three (3) municipalities to apply jointly for OATA for performance contract assistance. We have revised the current PON to include the following:

"Up to three (3) municipalities may submit one application and receive a combined total of up to \$30,000 (up to \$10,000 per municipality) for owner's agent technical assistance."

Please avail yourself of this revised version as it includes additional information for joint applications. Due to expected economies of scale, the grant amount will be a maximum amount of \$30,000 (\$10,000 per municipality).

Question:

Our city was previously award an OATA grant under the solicitation issued in August 2013 (PON-ENE-2014-004) but we were unable to use it at the time and returned it to DOER. Are we eligible to apply for an OATA grant under this current solicitation?

Answer:

Yes

Question:

Looking at the OATA application, one of the eligible categories is "Energy Savings Performance Contract, including street lights." Would the services of a technical expert to negotiate with National Grid for a better rate on our town's behalf fall under that category?

Answer:

After reviewing the OATA application, we have determined that the use of OATA funds for a technical expert to assist with street lighting rates does not qualify under our open funding opportunity.

Question:

Wondering if wastewater energy recovery would be an eligible use for the OATA grants?

Answer:

Yes. The project categories for which we are providing Owner's Agent Technical Assistance (OATA) grants includes:

- Engineering studies for more efficient heating systems (e.g., conversion from steam to hot water; NOT a more efficient boiler) or conversion to renewable or alternative fuel sourced heating system, including wastewater energy recovery.

Please refer to our PON for eligibility and application details.

Question:

(follow up to previous question) Would an engineering study to determine the feasibility of anaerobic digesters at some of our wastewater treatment facilities fall within that category?

Answer:

AD does not fall within our project category, but you might try contacting the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, which does have funding for AD studies.